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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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HICKMAN PALERMO TRUONG & BECKER, LLP
2055 GATEWAY PLACE
SUITE 550
SAN JOSE, CA 95110

EXAMINER

ZURITA, JAMES H

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
3625	

DATE MAILED: 08/22/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/884,816

Applicant(s)

HASTINGS ET AL.

Examiner

James H. Zurita

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 5 June 2006.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-6,8-13,16-18,20-24,28,31-33,35-38 and 42 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,4-6,8-13,16-18,20-24,28,31-33,35-38 and 42 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. <u>20060815</u> . |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____. |

DETAILED ACTION

Prosecution History

On 18 June 2001, applicant filed the instant application, which is a continuation in part of 09/561041, filed 28 April 2000, now US Patent 6,584,450. The instant application claims priority from provisional application 60/212193, filed on 16 June 2000, and from provisional application 60/244793, filed on 31 October 2000.

On 5 October 2004, the Examiner mailed an Election/Restriction Requirement.

On 19 October 2004, applicants elected claims 1-24 and 28-41 for prosecution.

On 8 November 2004, the Examiner issued a first Office Action, rejecting elected claims 1-24 and 28-41. Claims 25-27 were withdrawn from consideration.

On 14 February 2005, applicant filed a response to the first Office Action.

On 30 August 2005, in a final rejection, the Examiner rejected claims 1-24 and 28-41 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as anticipated by Chislenko (6,041,311).

On 10 November 2005, applicant requested continued examination.

On 27 February 2006, the Examiner rejected claims 1, 4-6, 8-13, 16-18, 20-24, 28, 31-33, 35-38 and 42 as anticipated by Chislenko (6,041,311).

On 5 June 2006, applicant filed an amendment.

Response to Amendment

Applicant's submission of 5 June 2006 has been entered.

Applicant amended claims 1, 13 and 28. Claims 1, 4-6, 8-13, 16-18, 20-24, 28, 31-33, 35-38 and 42 are pending and will be examined.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 5 June 2006 have been very carefully and fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant argues:

There is no teaching or suggestion in Chislenko of predicting how the user would rate the item by determining a similarity between the items used to select the neighboring users and the item to be recommended. Furthermore, Chislenko does not teach or suggest determining this similarity by comparing the ratings made by the neighboring users for the items used to select the neighboring users to the ratings made by the neighboring users for the item to be recommended. Rather, only the ratings made by the neighboring users for the item to be recommended are considered to predict how the user would rate the item.

In response to these arguments, the Examiner respectfully notes that items are recommendation to users based on prediction(s) of whether a user would like the item. Similarly, a user is warned away from an item, as in Col. 9, lines 28-38.

Applicant argues, spacing added:

For purposes of explanation, presuming that the neighboring users of ***Chislenko*** are the user 704 (the one or more other users) of FIG. 7 of the present application, ***Chislenko*** teaches [only] using

the ratings made by user 704 (the one or more other users) for item 716 (the item that the user has not yet rated)

to estimate how user 702 would rate item 716 (the item that the user has not yet rated).

In response, the Examiner notes that Chislenko discloses recommending items not yet rated by a user, as in Col. 18, lines 12-19.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 1, 4-6, 8-13, 16-18, 20-24, 28, 31-33, 35-38 and 42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Chislenko U.S. Patent Number 6,041,311.

As per claim 1. Chislenko discloses a computer-implemented method for estimating how a user would rate an item that the user has not yet rated, the method comprising the steps of:

[step one] In a computer system, **identifying** one or more **items** that

- have been rated favorably by a user [See, for example, at least Col. 3, lines 38-57, "Each user profile associates items with the ratings given to those items by the user." For favorable ratings, see at least Col. 8, lines 19-35 and Col. 4, lines 40-55, concerning indications that a user likes a page, for example]; and
- have ratings that satisfy a minimum rating threshold [See, for example, at least references to thresholds used to calculate similarity factors between users, as in Col. 7, lines 40-65].

[step two] In a computer system, **identifying** one or more **other users [e.g., neighboring users]** that have

- rated the one or more items (Col. 4, lines 56-65, "Each item profile records how particular users have rated this particular item.") and
- given ratings to the one or more items that are substantially similar to ratings given by the user to the one or more items (Col. 2, lines 40-54); and

[step three] in the computer system

estimating how the user would rate the item that the user has not yet rated (Col. 2, lines 26-30: "The ratings given to items by the neighboring users as well as the

weights assigned to those neighboring users are then used to predict ratings and to make recommendations of items that the user has not yet rated") by determining a similarity between [a] the one or more other items and [b] the item that the user has not yet rated [see, for example, Col. 9, lines 29-48] by comparing [a] ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items to [b] ratings given by the one or more other users to the item that the user has not yet rated. [Col. 9, lines 49-61, Col. 18, lines 11-19 "...this allows the recommendation of unrated items to a user based on the [unrated item's] similarity to other items which the user has already rated highly"]

As per claim 4. Chislenko further discloses a method wherein the step of identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given ratings to the one or more items that are substantially similar to ratings given by the user to the one or more item includes identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given ratings to the one or more items that are within a specified amount of ratings given by the user to the one or more items (Chislenko: Col. 9, line 62 to Col. 10, line 6).

As per claim 6. Chislenko further discloses a method wherein the step of identifying one or more other users that have rated the one or more items and given ratings to the one or more items that are within a specified amount of ratings given by the user to the one or more items includes determining whether an average of the ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items is within a

specified amount of an average of the ratings given by the user to the one or more items (Chislenko: Col. 7, lines 13-28).

As per claim 8. Chislenko further discloses a method wherein the step of comparing the ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items to ratings given by the one or more other users to the item that the user has not yet rated includes comparing an average of the ratings given by the one or more other users to the one or more items to ratings given by the one or more other users to the item that the user has not yet rated (Chislenko: Col. 7, lines 13-28).

As per claim 9, Chislenko further discloses a method wherein the item is a movie and the one or more items are one or more movies (Chislenko: Col. 3, lines 5-15). The Examiner again notes that even though Chislenko discloses a method according to claim 9 as indicated supra, data identifying a particular item type is not functionally related to the substrate of the method. Thus, this descriptive material will not distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1391, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

As per claim 10. Chislenko further discloses a method wherein the item is a game and the one or more items are one or more games (Chislenko: Col. 3, lines 5-15).

Even though Chislenko discloses a method according to claim 10 as indicated supra, the Examiner notes, data identifying a particular item type is not functionally related to the substrate of the method. Thus, this descriptive material will not

distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art in terms of patentability, see *In re Gulack*, 703 F.2d 1391, 217 USPQ 401, 404 (Fed. Cir. 1983); *In re Lowry*, 32 F.3d 1579, 32 USPQ2d 1031 (Fed. Cir. 1994).

As per claim 11, Chislenko discloses a method wherein the item is a rental item (Chislenko: Col. 3, lines 5-15).

As per claim 12, Chislenko further discloses a method wherein the number of items in the one or more items is at least a specified number of -items (Chislenko: Col. 10, lines 15-31).

Claims 13, 16-18, 20-24 are rejected under the same rationale set forth for claims 1, 4-12.

Claims 28, 31-33, 35-38, 42 are rejected under the same rationale as set forth above in claims 1, 4-6, 8-12.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of

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the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James H. Zurita whose telephone number is 571-272-6766. The examiner can normally be reached on 8a-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeffrey A. Smith can be reached on 571-272-6763. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

James Zurita
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3625
14 August 2006

James Zurita
Primary Examiner